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# Center for Psychotraumatology

Institute of Psychology  
Vilnius University

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Annual report  
2018



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# Introduction

## 2018 Year in Review

The year 2018 was a major turning point for the Vilnius Center for Psychotraumatology (PTC) headed by prof. dr. Evaldas Kazlauskas. The year was marked with an official establishment of the Center, also the year was fruitful of research output, and new exciting initiatives. This is a brief overview of the last year's PTC activities, followed by the full 2018 Annual Report.

After almost two decades of research in the field of psychotraumatology in Lithuania, Center for Psychotraumatology at the Institute of Psychology, Vilnius University, was established in March 2018. Center for Psychotraumatology aims to be the leading research excellence center of psychotrauma and stress-related disorders in the Baltic region. Besides building the infrastructure of the Center, priority in 2018 was given to establishing collaborations with other leading trauma research centers across Europe, and joining European collaborative psychotrauma research centers network. Collaboration with Norwegian Center of Violence and Trauma (NKVTS) was started, also collaboration with Danish National Center of Center for Psychotraumatology (prof. A. Elklit) was renewed. Collaboration agreement was signed with Arq Psychotrauma Expert Group, the leading psychotrauma center in the Netherlands. Long lasting collaboration with Division of Psychopathology and Clinical Intervention, University of Zurich lead by prof. A. Maercker was very important for us.

We at Vilnius Center for Psychotraumatology were proud of the achievements of the current staff, and inspired by the new excellent members. A recognition of psychotraumatology was marked with a new position of professor of clinical psychology (with specialization in psychotraumatology). The Head of the Center prof. dr. E. Kazlauskas was appointed to this position. We were proud that postdoc researcher dr. Paulina Zelviene received the honorable National Award for Young Scientists in Social and Humanitarian Sciences from the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences.

## Introduction

Dr. J. Eimontas completed PhD studies and received his doctoral degree with a dissertation on internet-delivered interventions. A new PhD position was established via grant from the Research Council of Lithuania (RCL), and experienced clinical psychologist Ieva Daniunaite joined our adolescence study. We also have an internship program, which was funded by RCL, and intern Monika Kvedaraite successfully joined our research team.

Year 2018 was productive in research output. We were lucky enough to have our publications accepted in major traumatic stress journals, the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* and *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*. We also had more research output in collaboration with our partners from other institutions. We aimed to a more complex research designs, with longitudinal and cross-cultural studies as our priorities in 2018. While in 2018 we did not conduct intervention studies, we were still analyzing data from the previous trials, and planning future interventions studies. We focused more on a developmental process of trauma and stress-related disorders, and started planning a longitudinal study of adolescence trauma and resilience, data collection for this study will start in 2019.

We expect to maintain the growth of the Center of Psychotraumatology in the year 2019. We aim to strengthen our international collaborations. Our main projects will be focused on the large adolescence study in Lithuania, and also study in collaboration with University Hospital on psychological effects of heart surgery or other diseases.

*Prof. dr. Evaldas Kazlauskas*

## About the Center of Psychotraumatology

The Center has a long-term expertise in psychotraumatology, which is reflected in a number of conducted research projects, published scientific papers, national and international collaboration. The main research focus of the Vilnius Center for Psychotraumatology is on disorders specifically associated with stress. The Center is involved in research on the resilience and risk factors of the stress-related disorders, development and evaluation of psychosocial interventions. The Center is led by prof. dr. Evaldas Kazlauskas.

### **Mission**

Acknowledgment of the effects of trauma on individuals and society by providing evidence-based knowledge of trauma responses for development of care for trauma survivors.

### **Vision**

Leading psychotraumatology research excellence center in the region conducting high quality trauma-related research.

### **Areas of expertise**

Psychotraumatology; stress-related disorders: posttraumatic stress disorder, complex posttraumatic stress disorder, adjustment disorder; psychological assessment; evaluation of psychosocial interventions; treatment studies; internet-based interventions; resilience; effects of political violence and oppression.

### Core staff members

**Prof. dr. Evaldas Kazlauskas** is a clinical psychologist, and a leading expert of stress-related disorders in Lithuania. He is the Head of Center for Psychotraumatology at Vilnius University. Evaldas has been involved in psychotraumatology research and clinical practice since 2000. He is a board member of the European Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, and President of the Lithuanian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies.



**Dr. Paulina Zelviene** is a clinical psychologist and one of the leading new generation psychology researchers in the Baltic region. Paulina is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the Center for Psychotraumatology, Vilnius University. Scientific achievements of Paulina have been recently acknowledged by the Lithuanian Academy of Science – for an exceptional research she received 2018 Award for Young Scientists from the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences.



**Dr. Neringa Grigutyte** is a clinical psychologist and received her PhD from Vilnius University with a focus on effects of childhood sexual abuse. Neringa participated in a number of national and international research projects. She is a current President of the Lithuanian Psychological Association.



## Staff

### PhD students

Dr. Jonas Eimontas defended PhD thesis '**Internet-based intervention for adjustment disorder: outcomes of a self-help modular program**' in November, 2018. Supervisor prof. dr. E. Kazlauskas.

PhD student Goda Gegieckaite. Research project '**Complexity of posttraumatic stress reactions: construct validity and predictors**'. Expected defense in October, 2020. Project is funded with external funding by the Grant from the Research Council of Lithuania. Supervisor prof. dr. E. Kazlauskas.

PhD student Ieva Daniunaite. Research project '**Risk factors and changes of adjustment disorder symptoms**'. Expected defense in October, 2022. Project is funded with external funding by the Grant from the Research Council of Lithuania. Supervisor prof. dr. E. Kazlauskas.

### Students

Agne Madeikyte

Jogile Medeisiene

Miglė Rudyte

Gintare Astrauskaite

Karolina Jocyte

Ruta Budreckyte

Gintare Korsakaite

Karolina Maceviciute

Saule Makutenaite

Ieva Stonyte

Lukas Juozapavicius

Vaiva Milasiunaite

### Interns

Monika Kvedaraite, *since June, 2018*

Leonora Engelbach (Germany) *February-April, 2018*

## Staff exchange

September, 2018. Dr. P. Zelviene was on a two week scientific visit to Norwegian Center for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS), University of Oslo.

May, 2018. Prof. dr. E. Kazlauskas was on a two week scientific visit to National Center for Psychotraumatology, University of Southern Denmark.

## International collaborations

- Arq Psychotrauma Expert Group, The Netherlands
- Danish National Centre for Psychotraumatology, University of Southern Denmark
- Division of Clinical Psychopathology and Intervention, University of Zurich, Switzerland
- Internet, health and clinical psychology research group, Linköping university, Sweden
- Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies, University of Oslo
- StressLab, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Poland
- European Society for Traumatic Stress Studies

## Research projects

- The structure of ICD-11 trauma syndroms and psychometric properties of the International Trauma Questionnaire (ITQ) in Lithuanian population
- Long-term effects on health-related quality of life and stress-related disorders after heart surgery
- Effects of childhood trauma and resilience in adolescence
- Cross-cultural study of trauma adversity and resilience metaphors
- Vilnius ICD-11 Adjustment Disorder Study

## Research grants

PostDoc research project **‘Effects of Childhood Trauma: Stress and Resilience’** (STAR-A) (2017–2019). This research is funded by the European Social Fund under the No 09.3.3-LMT-K-712-02-0096 ‘Development of Competences of Scientists, other Researchers and Students through Practical Research Activities’ measure. PI dr. P. Zelviene, scientific advisor prof. dr. E. Kazlauskas. Project budget 42,502 EUR.

PhD research project **‘Longitudinal study of stressors and stress-related disorders in adolescent’** (2018–2022). PhD student - I. Daniunaite, expected defense in October, 2022. Project is funded with external funding by the Grant from the Research Council of Lithuania. Supervisor prof. dr. E. Kazlauskas.

## Research Grants

Student internship research project **‘Traumatic experiences and post-traumatic stress responses in the context of development’** (2018-2019). This research is funded by the European Social Fund under the No 09.3.3-LMT-K-712 ‘Development of Competences of Scientists, other Researchers and Students through Practical Research Activities’ measure. Student M. Kvedaraite, supervisor prof. dr. E. Kazlauskas.

Student internship research project **‘Violence against women: posttraumatic stress risk factors’** (2018). This research was funded by the European Social Fund under the No 09.3.3- LMT-K-712 ‘Development of Competences of Scientists, other Researchers and Students through Practical Research Activities’ measure. Student M. Kvedaraite, supervisor prof. dr. E. Kazlauskas.

## Submitted grants proposals

COST action proposal (submitted). **‘European network on health and social responses to terrorist attacks’** (Respond). Number of partner institutions - 27.

H2020 Euratom Call NFRP-2018 (submitted). **‘Cooperation on Chernobyl health research for better integration’** (CO-CHER Integra). Topic NFRP-2018 -8. Number of partner institutions - 23. Budget of the proposal 6,022,512 EUR.

Research Group Initiatives Research Projects Call (submitted). **‘Challenges for psychotrauma recognition: underlying psychosocial mechanisms and potential for change’** (T-REC). Research project submitted to the Research Council of Lithuania.

### Referred journal articles

Schäfer, I., Hopchet, M., Vandamme, N., Ajdukovic, D., El-Hage, W., Egreteau, L., Javakhishvili, J., Makhashvili, N., Lampe, A., Ardion, V., Kazlauskas, E., Mouthaan, J., Sijbrandij, M., Dragan, M., Lis-Turlejska, M., Figueiredo-Braga, M., Sales, L., Arnberg, F., Nazarenko, T., Nalyvaiko, N., Armour, C., & Murphy, D. (in press). Trauma and trauma care in Europe. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*. doi:10.1080/20008198.2018.1556553

Knefel, M., Lueger-Schuster, B., Bisson, J., Karatzias, T., Kazlauskas, E., & Neil, P. R. (in press). A cross-cultural comparison of ICD-11 Complex PTSD symptom networks in Austria, Lithuania, and UK. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*.

Paliaukiene, V., Kazlauskas, E., Eimontas, J., & Skeryte-Kazlauskiene, M. (2018). Music performance anxiety among students of the academy in Lithuania. *Music Education Research*, 20(3), 390–397. doi:10.1080/14613808.2018.1445208

Eimontas, J., Gegieckaite, G., Dovydaityene, M., Mazulyte, E., Rimsaite, Z., Skruibis, P., Zelviene, P., & Kazlauskas, E. (2018). The role of therapist support on effectiveness of an internet-based modular self-help intervention for adjustment disorder: A randomized controlled trial. *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping*, 31, 146–158. doi:10.1080/10615806.2017.1385065

Kazlauskas, E., Gegieckaite, G., Hyland, P., Zelviene, P., & Cloitre, M. (2018). The structure of ICD-11 PTSD and complex PTSD in Lithuanian mental health services. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 9, 1414559. doi:10.1080/20008198.2017.1414559

Zelviene, P., & Kazlauskas, E. (2018). Adjustment disorder: Current perspectives. *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment*, 14, 375–381. doi:10.2147/NDT.S121072

Kazlauskas, E., Gegieckaite, G., Eimontas, J., Zelviene, P., & Maercker, A. (2018). A brief measure of the International Classification of Diseases-11 adjustment disorder: Investigation of psychometric properties in adult help-seeking sample. *Psychopathology*, 51, 10–15. doi:10.1159/000484415

## Publications

Eimontas, J., Gegieckaite, G., Dovydaityene, M., Mazulyte, E., Rimsaite, Z., Skruibis, P., Zelviene, P., & Kazlauskas, E. (2018). The role of therapist support on effectiveness of an internet-based modular self-help intervention for adjustment disorder: A randomized controlled trial. *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping, 31*, 146–158. doi:10.1080/10615806.2017.1385065

Kazlauskas, E., Zelviene, P., Lorenz, L., Quero, S., & Maercker, A. (2017). A scoping review of ICD-11 adjustment disorder research. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology, 8*, 1421819. doi:10.1080/20008198.2017.1421819

Karatzias, T., Cloitre, M., Maercker, A., Kazlauskas, E., Shevlin, M., Hyland, P., Bisson, J., Roberts, N.P., & Brewin, C.R. (2017). PTSD and complex PTSD: ICD -11 updates on concept and measurement in the UK, USA, Germany and Lithuania. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology, 8*, 1418103. doi:10.1080/20008198.2017.1418103

## Book chapters

Meili, I., Gegieckaite, G., & Kazlauskas, E. (2018). Metaphors of Posttraumatic Growth: A Qualitative Study in Swiss, Lithuanian, and Brazilian Rural Communities. In A. Maercker, E. Heim, & L. J. Kirmayer (Eds.). *Cultural Clinical Psychology and PTSD*. (pp. 141–156). Hogrefe Publishing.

## Conference presentations

Zelviene, P., Daniunaite, I., Kvedaraite, M., & Kazlauskas, E. (2018). *Psichologinės traumos ir atsparumas paauglystėje. [Psychological trauma and resilience among youth]*. Kasmetinė Lietuvos psichiatrų konferencija „Ankstyvosios vaikystės traumos įtaka psichikos sutrikimų išsivystymui, jų diagnostikai ir gydymui“ [Annual conference of Lithuanian Psychiatrists]. Vilnius, Lithuania, 19 December, 2018.

Maercker, A., Kazlauskas, E., Lueger-Schuster, B., Jokic-Begic, N., & Popiel, A. (2018). *How clinical psychologists from Eastern Europe integrate their agendas with Europe's other regions?* Inaugural meeting of European Association on Clinical Psychology and Psychological Treatment (EACLIPT). Linköping, Sweden, 2-3 November, 2018.

Urbanaviciute, I., Grazulyte, D., Kazlauskas, E., Norkiene, I., Kezyte, G., Sabestinaite, A., Kolevinskaite, S., Zelviene, P., Korsakaite, G., Ringaitiene, D., & Sipylaite, J., (2018). *Posttraumatic stress 5-years after cardiac surgery*. 9th International Baltic Congress of Anaesthesiology, Intensive Care and Pain Management. Vilnius, Lithuania, 25-27 October, 2018.

Kolevinskaite, S., Grazulyte, D., Kazlauskas, E., Norkiene, I., Kezyte, G., Zelviene, P., Korsakaite, G., Urbanaviciute, I., Sabestinaite, A., Ringaitiene, D., & Sipylaite, J. (2018). *Long-term quality of life following elective cardiac surgery: preliminary findings of a 5-year follow-up study*. 9th International Baltic Congress of Anaesthesiology, Intensive Care and Pain Management. Vilnius, Lithuania, 25-27 October, 2018.

Zelviene, P. (2018). *Trauma research in Lithuania*. Health services research in the wake of terrorist attacks and collective trauma. Oslo, Norway, 6-7 September, 2018.

Grazulyte, D., Norkiene, I., Kazlauskas, E., Zelviene, P., Korsakaite, G., Ringaitiene, D., & Sipylaite, J. (2018). *Long-term quality of life following heart surgery: preliminary findings of a 5-year follow-up study*. 33rd EACTA Annual Congress. Manchester, England, 19-21 September, 2018.

Zelviene, P., Kvedaraite, M., & Kazlauskas, E. (2018). *Understanding trauma: coping with negative life events*. Workshop. International Psychology Student Exchange between Ireland and Lithuania. Vilnius, Lithuania, 12-21 August, 2018.

## Conference presentations

Stupnianeck, K., Schmitt, M., & Grigutyte, N. (2018). *The stability of belief in a just world when experiencing injustice: Effects of procedural justice*. 7th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for Justice Research (ISJR). Atlanta, Georgia, 25-28 July, 2018.

Szczepaniak, M., Eimontas, J., Kazlauskas, E., & Cieslak, R. (2018). *A meta-analysis on the longitudinal relationship between PTSD symptom clusters*. 39th STAR Conference, Stress Anxiety And Resilience. Lublin, Poland, 10-13 July, 2018.

Zelviene, P., & Kazlauskas, E. (2018). *Adult adjustment disorder: A moderating effect of childhood abuse*. Lithuanian Congress of Psychology. Klaipėda, Lithuania, 17–19 May, 2018.

Zelviene, P., Kazlauskas, E., Kvedaraitė, M., & Dirvelyte, S. (2018). *Evidence-based specialized psychotraumatological EMDR treatment in Lithuania*. Lithuanian Congress of Psychology. Klaipėda, Lithuania, 17-19 May, 2018.

Eimontas, J., & Kazlauskas, E. (2018). *How much of internet-based self-help is enough for adjustment disorder? Findings from a randomized controlled trial comparing regular self-help vs. self-help with therapist support on demand*. 5th conference of the European Society for Research on Internet Interventions. Dublin, Ireland, 19-20 April, 2018.

## Training and clinical services

### Training

These trainings for mental health professionals are provided at the Center:

- Assessment of trauma-related disorders;
- Training workshops on trauma-focused treatments.

### Clinical services

These outpatient services are available at the Center:

- Assessment of trauma exposure and trauma-related disorders;
- Evidence based trauma-focused treatments.





## Center for Psychotraumatology

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